

**From:** Marsha Stickford [mstickford@ashevillenc.gov]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 14, 2009 4:12 PM  
**To:** Marsha Stickford  
**Subject:** [January 2009 Edition] City of Asheville Neighborhood E-News



#### IN THIS ISSUE

Help Protect Our  
Neighborhood Street Trees

Making Technology  
Investments Makes Business  
Sense for Neighborhoods

Asheville Transit Hosts Public  
Hearing For Transit Master  
Plan

Adopt-a-Street and keep  
Asheville Clean and Green

Disposal of Florescent Bulbs

Asheville Police Department  
Earns 5th Re-Accreditation

**City of Asheville Home Page:**  
for more information on City  
News & Events, Projects &  
Initiatives

**Current City Council Meeting  
Agenda**

**Upcoming Planning and  
Zoning Meeting**

**Next Technical Review  
Meeting**

**Asheville City Council Boards  
and Commissions**

## JANUARY 2009

---

### Help Protect Our Neighborhood Street Trees

Please help the City of Asheville Arborist protect our street trees! Often citizens use trees to post signs announcing neighborhood yard and garage sales and other onto our city-maintained, neighborhood street trees. Nailing signs onto trees is not only unsightly, but it damages the trees.

In addition, posting signs on City maintained trees is prohibited by City ordinance. Section 20-21C states, "No person shall attach any object, including but not limited to, rope, wire, chain or sign, to any tree or shrubbery in or upon any City property. . ."

Please find other ways to advertise for events such as yard and house sales and encourage others to do the same. Don't attach signs to street trees, and help pass the word along to others.

For more information on this issue or the City's management of street trees, please contact Mark Foster, ISA Certified Arborist, City of Asheville, at [mfoster@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:mfoster@ashevillenc.gov).

---

### Making Technology Investments Makes

## **Business Sense for Neighborhoods**

City Council recently re-affirmed its commitment to invest \$2,000,000 into a project that we're calling the Business Technology Improvement Project (BTIP). It is a project to make the City of Asheville into a more efficient, and automated institution, allowing efficiencies to be reinvested into our line services to citizens. The total cost represents about 1.5% of the City's total operating budget. It is worthwhile, of course, given the state of the economy, to be very up front about why this makes sense.

First, why now? We all know that any businesses need to keep total business costs to a minimum, and that technology can help to automate a business. Specifically, any sized business must choose to either hire more people to do low-value activities like fill in paper forms and photocopy, or automate with technology.

The City of Asheville has historically had a mainframe-based system of processes that have all been paper-intensive. Has it also been staff intensive? Of course. One has only to look at recent history to see that the City has added 153 staff over 5 years. Naturally, there are many factors to this growth, including growing community needs for service. But, whether I consider my work in the private or public sector, I have seen that a lack of automation does contribute to manual tasks that must be accomplished - and therefore a need for more staff to handle tracking & accountability, i.e. paperwork. We'd all rather that staff be out there fixing sidewalks, picking up trash, or patrolling neighborhoods rather than filling in paper forms in triplicate or hunting for lost paperwork.

Asheville has been affected by the global recession just as other organizations have. Through re-engineering and an early retirement program, staff hopes to reduce a daunting budget gap. But it's penny-wise and pound-foolish to re-engineer, shed staff through early retirement, and then keep the same mainframe systems that in some ways contributed to staff growth and inefficiencies over the years.

It would be similarly foolish to buy a luxury car of

a system; but Asheville is buying a system from the lowest responsible bidder. Some bids on this project were 50% higher than the one we chose. We can rest assured that this system is not the luxury version. It is capable enough, however, that citizens will benefit. Just by going from paper forms to electronic forms, according to Planning magazine, make form costs drop from about \$5 per form to \$1.65 per form. And cost savings are not pure speculation: recently, in partnership with our Budget office and Public Works, we utilized an IT (Information Technology) investment that City council made in fiscal year 2008 in order to improve the quality of the City's data to the point where we anticipate \$300,000 in more accurate utility franchise fees, with \$100,000 of ongoing revenue every year. Ultimately, this is a savings to citizens that can be invested in your neighborhood.

The bottom line is that this project will help to answer the question of how City management can re-engineer its organization to serve a growing community without significantly and adversely affecting service levels. We will be updating Council in coming months as to our progress, and we are delighted for the opportunity to improve efficiency in our City.

*This article was written by Jonathan Feldman, Information Technology Services Director, City of Asheville, who can be contacted at [jfeldman@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:jfeldman@ashevillenc.gov).*

---

### **Asheville Transit Hosts Public Hearing For Transit Master Plan**

There will be a public forum for the Transit Master Plan on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009 from 4pm-7pm, in the Asheville Civic Center's banquet hall. The meeting will be held in an "open house" format with no formal presentation. Instead, attendees will be able to offer in-person feedback to consultants, ask questions of staff, and see preliminary data first-hand.

The goal of the forum is to gather information that will help the Transit System create a plan that will meet the needs of the community

and create sustainable transportation options.

A Transit Master Plan is a document that analyzes existing transit services and develops data to support planning and decision making. In the case of Asheville, this will mean studying Asheville's 24 bus routes and comparing them to long-term trends. The study should be completed by July 2009, and will offer short and long term recommendations on how the city could improve public transit.

To provide additional opportunities for community members to provide input into the Master Plan process, [ATS staff created an online survey to get feedback and suggestions.](#)

Currently, Asheville Transit provides bus service throughout the City of Asheville and other local areas with 24 bus routes running from 6 a.m.-11:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 6 a.m.-12:45 a.m. Friday and Saturday. Transit maps and schedules are available at [www.ashevillenc.gov/transit](http://www.ashevillenc.gov/transit).

Routes radiate from the Transit Center located downtown at 49 Coxe Avenue next to the U.S. Post Office. The center provides such amenities as clean restrooms and indoor and outdoor seating. There is also an on-duty information assistant who provides information about routes, or from whom you may purchase monthly and annual passes and ticket books.

For more information on the Transit Master Plan, please contact Mariate Echeverry, City of Asheville Interim Transit Manager at 232-4528 or [mecheverry@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:mecheverry@ashevillenc.gov).

---

### **Adopt-a-Street and keep Asheville Clean and Green**

The Adopt-a-Street program has existed for years in Asheville and is a continuously growing program in the community. Asheville GreenWorks/Quality Forward and the City of Asheville partner with neighborhoods, businesses, individuals and groups in order to help keep our community clean. Groups and individuals

wanting to adopt a road commit to keeping a stretch of road clean and free of litter for at least one year - once adopted a street can belong to the group or individual indefinitely. Asheville GreenWorks provides volunteers with supplies, including trash and recycling bags, gloves, volunteer vests, litter pickers, and traffic calming signs. The City of Asheville picks up collected litter and provides Adopt-a-Street signs for qualifying groups.

This program is a great way for neighborhoods to show the community that they care about their streets as a place to walk, drive, live, & work. Take ownership of the street you live on as a neighborhood, with neighbors, your family, or as an individual. No one wants to live in a trashy neighborhood, but it takes commitment to clean it up and keep it clean.

For more information about this program or to sign up your street or neighborhood, contact Allison McGehee at Asheville GreenWorks/Quality Forward by contacting her at 254-1776 or [allison@qualityforward.org](mailto:allison@qualityforward.org). Please join us in cleaning and greening our community!

Asheville GreenWorks/Quality Forward is a volunteer based environmental project group that has been working to clean and green Asheville and Buncombe for over 35 years. For more information about our environmental initiatives or to sign up to volunteer go to [www.qualityforward.org](http://www.qualityforward.org).

---

### **Disposal of Florescent Bulbs**

If you are looking for a place to dispose of regular and compact florescent bulbs - which cannot be thrown out with your regular trash - please take them to the following drop off sites:

- Fire Station #2 at 315 Livingston Street
- Fire Station #11 at 7 Rocky Ridge Road near the Biltmore Square Mall

---

### **Asheville Police Department Earns 5th Re-**

## Accreditation

In August 2008, the Asheville Police Department (APD) continued its commitment to professional excellence by successfully completing the voluntary reaccreditation process administered by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc., (CALEA).

CALEA assesses law-enforcement agencies in the United States and Canada for the quality of their service and has accredited some 750 departments. CALEA requires agencies to comply with state-of-the-art standards in four basic areas: policy and procedures, administration, operations, and support services. APD has been accredited since 1994 and has gone through the process five times.

APD was presented to CALEA on Saturday, December 6 for review of the results of the August on-site visit by assessors. This review determined that the APD had the best accreditation report and on-site visit since it began its participation in the process and was first accredited in 1994. The Commission praised the Department and voted to award reaccreditation for another three years.

While seeking accreditation is a challenging and time consuming process, Police Chief Bill Hogan believes it is worth the effort because it demonstrates that APD meets all the required national standards to become one of the select few agencies to receive this certification and distinction. In the United States there are 16,000+ law enforcement agencies and APD is one of the less than 800 national and international law enforcement organizations that have met the demanding standards of excellence to receive the distinction of accreditation.

For information on the Accreditation and other law enforcement related items, please contact Melissa Williams, the Community Relations Manager for APD, at [mwilliams@ashevilenc.gov](mailto:mwilliams@ashevilenc.gov) or 232-4507.

[Subscribe](#) [Unsubscribe](#) [Preferences](#) [Send to a Friend](#) [Report Spam](#)